

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 INT-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 OES-03

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R 151215Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2324

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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EO 11652: NA ECON 1/14/76

TAGS: PFOR ENRG EG IR IS

SUBJ: SHAH "OFFERS" OIL TO ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 195

1. L'ORRIENT-LE-JOUR ARTICLE CITED REFTEL WAS LENGHY THINK-PIECE BY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF EDOUARD SAAB ON IRANIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, SHAH'S "GRANDIOSE" WORLD VIEW, AND IRAN'S POSSIBLE ROLE IN ME. SOURCE OF SAAB'S INFO NOT CLEAR BUT HE MENTIONED SHAH'S INTERVIEW WITH AL AHRAH.

2. PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH REFERS GENERALLY TO AID "PERFUL" IRAN COULD GIVE TO "DEPLETED" EGYPTIAN REGIME, SAYING IRAN COULD EXPECT FREE ZONE AT PORT SAID IN RETURN AND THAT IRANIAN CAPITAL WOULD NOT ONLY ALLAY EGYPTIAN BUDGETARY DIFFICULTIES
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BUT ALSO INDUCE DEVELOPED WORLD TO CONTRIBUTE TECHNOLOGY.

PARA CONTINUES THAT SHAH COULD PLAY POLITICAL ROLE IN ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AS MEDIATOR FOR DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES IN SINAI.

3. SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO "OFFER" THEN READS: "TEHRAN WOULD UNDERTAKE TO ASSURE PROVISION OF PETROLEUM TO ISRAEL UPON RETREAT OF LATTER FROM TERRITORIES IN SINAI WHERE WELLS OF ABU RUDEISS ARE SITUATED. BUT OPERATION WOULD ONLY BE CONCEIVED IN FRAMEWORK OF OVERALL PEACE PLAN RIGOROUSLY CONFORMING TO SPIRIT AND LETTER OF SC RES 242. FOR CERTAIN WESTERN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES IN (CAIRO), THIS DEMARCHE BY SHAH WOULD BE OF NATURE TO FAVOR REVIVAL OF KISSINGER MISSION, IN VIEW OF NEW ACCORD FOR SEPARATION OF FORCES."

4. SHORT AL HAWADITH ARTICLE PUBLISHED JAN 10 SAID ITS CAIRO CORRESPONDENT HAD LEARNED THAT SHAH HAD INFORMED ISRAELIS, VIA SECRETARY KISSINGER, THAT IRAN IS "PREPARED COMPENSATE ISRAEL FOR LOSS OF ABU RUDEISS OIL WELLS IF ISRAEL GIVES THEM BACK TO EGYPT." SHAH REPORTEDLY "WOULD PROVIDE SIXTY PERCENT OF ISRAEL'S NEEDS FREE OF CHARGE UNTIL FINAL ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IS AACHIEVED." MAGAZINE, NOTING ITS CORRESPONDENT HAD FILED HIS STORY BEFORE SHAH ACTUALLY ARRIVED IN CAIRO, ADMITTED THIS REPORT WAS "SPECULATION" AND ADDED THAT ITS CORRESPONDENT HAD BEEN ASKED TO VERIFY IT. "THIS SCOOP IS IMPORTANT," CONCLUDED HAWADITH, "BUT IT WILL BE MORE IMPORTANT IF ONE HUNDRED PERCENT TRUE."

5. COMMENT: WHOLE STORY SEEMS TO BE A BIT TOO TENOUS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AT THIS POINT. (WE NOTE THAT BEIRUT'S PRESTIGIOUS MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC SURVEY IGNORED IT.) HAWADITH CORRESPONDENT SEEMS TO HAVE ONLY GRASPED STRAW IN WIND, AND SAAB MAY ONLY HAVE BEEN INDULGING IN SUPPOSITION. NEITHER ARTICLE MENTIONS MECHANICS OF HOW IRAN WOULD SUPPLY OIL TO ISRAEL (E.G., DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY), NOR DO THEY ELABORATE ON THAT MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION, PRICE. ISRAEL PRESUMABLY NOW GETS ABU RUDEISS CRUSE AT COST. UNLESS POOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES ARE GIVEN DISCOUNT BY IRAN, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE LATTER GIVING ISRAEL LESS THAN WORLD PRICE OF DOLS 10-11 PER BARREL. ISRAEL CAN, OF COURSE, GET OIL ANYWHERE AT THAT PRICE, BUT PROBABLY CANNOT AFFORD IT.

6. ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF CURRENT ISRAELI-IRANIAN RELATIONS, WE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CALL EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S ATTENTION TO INTERESTING ARTICLE BY DAVID HOUSEGO THAT APPEARED IN JAN 8 ISSUE OF LONDON FINANCIAL TIMES (PAGE 5).
GODLEY

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